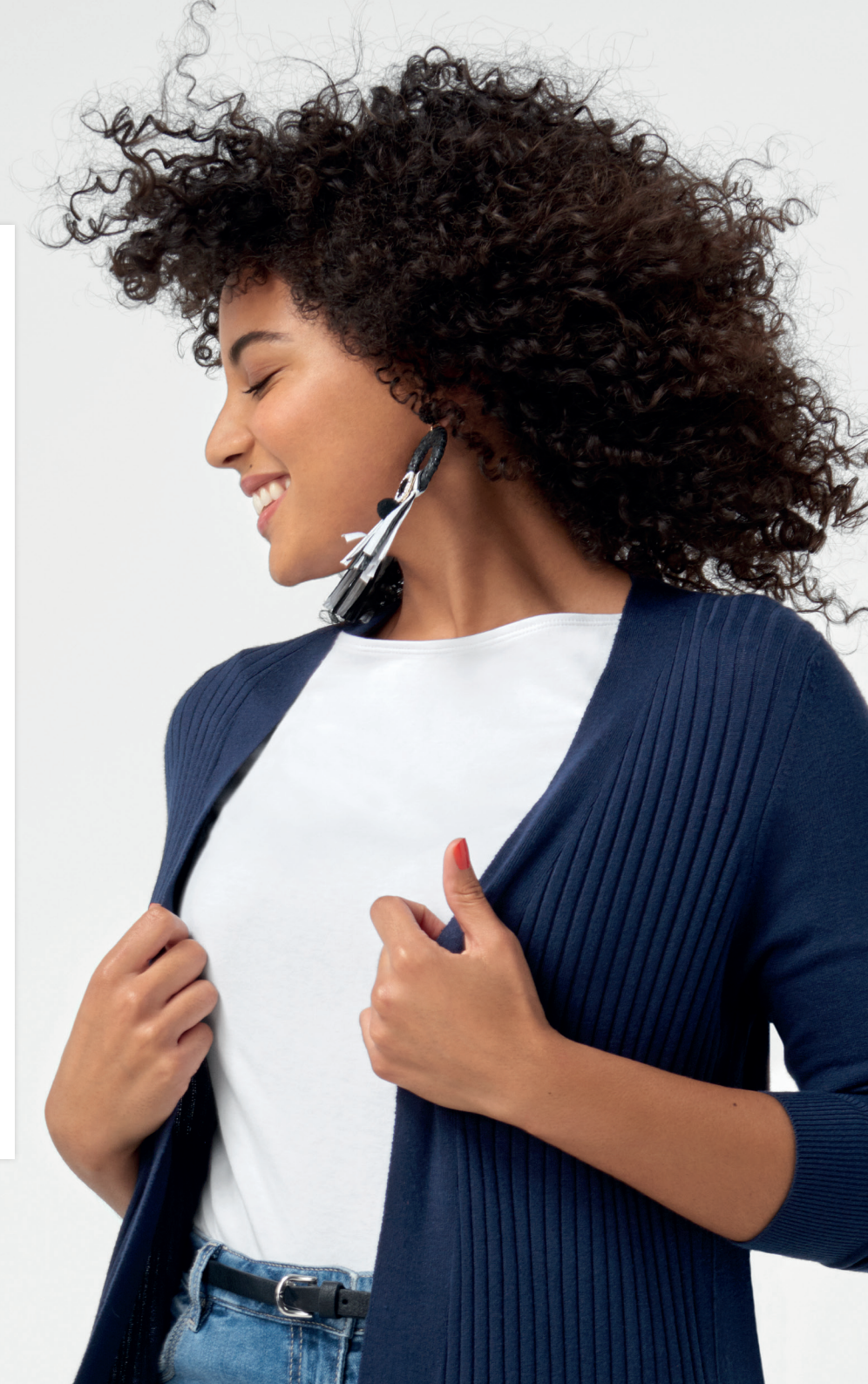


**M&S**  
CORPORATE GIFTS

**Empowering your  
workplace with  
employee rewards**

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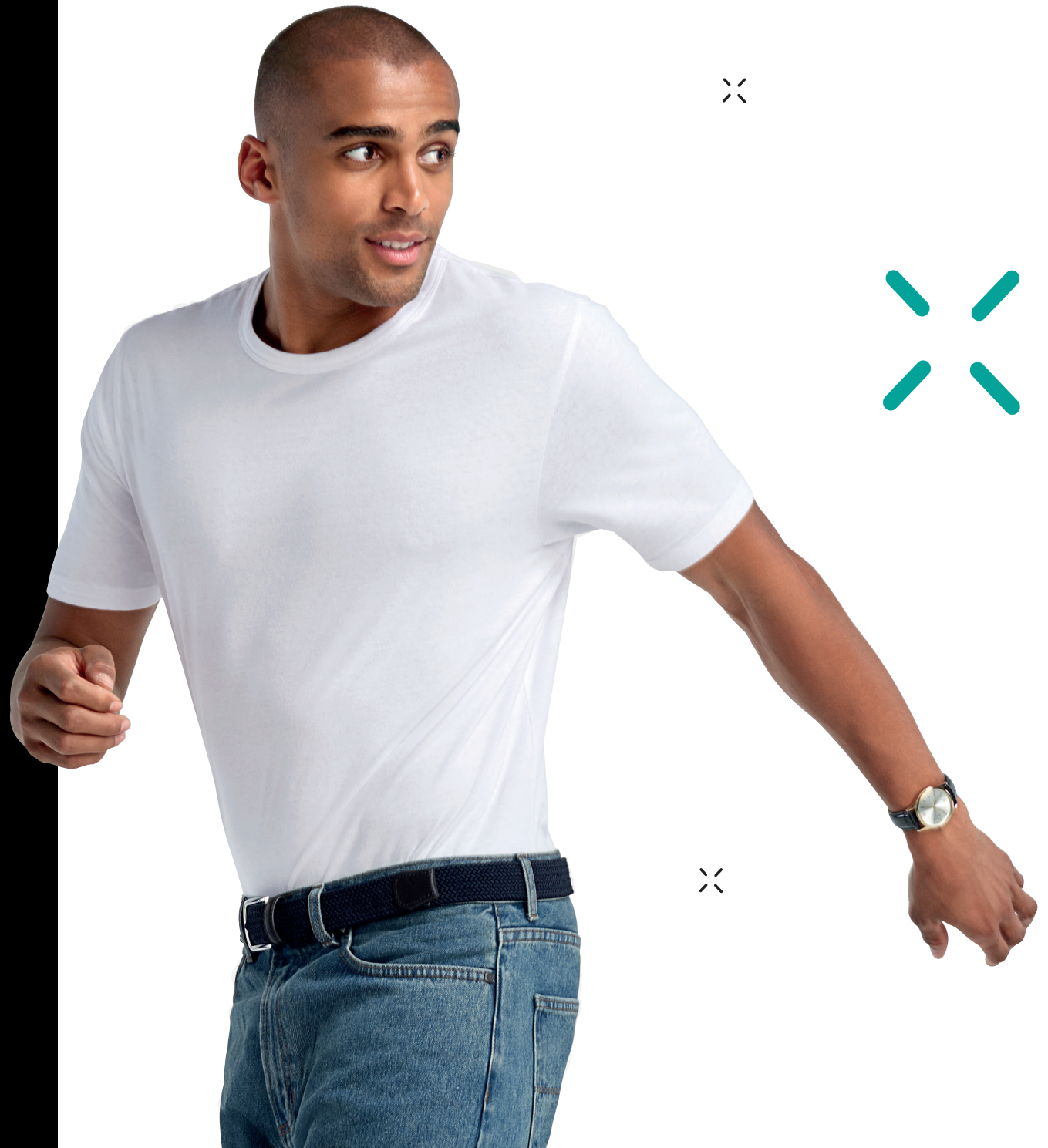




**It might not always feel like it, but as a HR representative, you are an executive of employee empowerment.**

From helping Katherine keep it together in the midst of family chaos, to giving Simon a laugh when his brand new car breaks down on the motorway, you care about the people you work with. And it might be precisely because you care that you can, at times, work yourself a little too hard to get the job done right.

At M&S, we believe you should be able to make everyone in your workplace happy – and that includes you. That's why we've created this guide to make empowering your employees as easy as pie. So, put the kettle on, take your shoes off, get yourself a biscuit (one with chocolate on top) and let us do the work. You've earned a rest.







## Empowering individuality

In any organisation, the number of people rotating in and out of different roles can be difficult to keep track of. With so many new names to learn, you may find yourself calling “Janet” “Jacqui” and “Michael” “Martin” one too many times – and this isn’t ideal for morale. No one wants to feel like they’re not worth remembering.

Getting to grips with new names and fresh faces is a small step towards recognising your employees for who they are. And one great way to make sure you never (or rarely – you’re human after all) forget a name is to encourage employees to express themselves in the workplace. Not only will this equal less embarrassment

for you, but it’s also a great retention strategy, as self-expression is clearly something the majority of employees value highly...

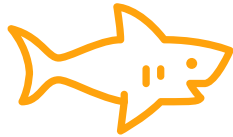
# 90%

**UK professionals think people should be able to express themselves at work<sup>i</sup>**



But how can you encourage self-expression during the hustle and bustle of everyday work-life?

## Here's just a few ideas we love...



### Quirky quizzes

Running a workplace quiz is a sure-fire way to empower employees to express themselves. We recommend asking different members of your workforce to run the quiz each week, stipulating that they have to write the questions themselves, based on a subject that interests them. Now, when you partake in Simon's twenty-questions on the different species of sharks, there's no way you'll be able to forget him.



### DIY desks

This game can take place monthly or quarterly, and it's a lot of fun. Set aside half an hour (perhaps on a Friday morning) and ask your team to bring in items from home to give their desk space a personal touch. It could be anything from plants and calendars, to action figures and ventriloquist dolls – so long as it's an expression of your employees' personality (and it remains PG). This is a quick, simple and entertaining way to demonstrate to your workforce that you're interested in getting to know who they really are – beyond the building.



### Birthday buddies

Using a birthday buddy system is a great way to encourage employees to get to know each other – even if they're stationed on the other side of the building. It's as simple as creating a list of employee birthdays, and asking your workers to purchase a gift for the person on the list whose birthday follows theirs. This challenges your team to learn about previously unknown co-workers, considering their likes and dislikes, to give them a gift they'll truly appreciate.

**By introducing some of these techniques into your workplace, you can make sure you never misplace a name again.**





# Empowering engagement

Raising employee engagement levels is a challenge faced by most HR representatives – at least, all the ones we’ve come across. And unfortunately, when your team is unhappy, the consequences can come fast and hard...



**9%**

to helping themselves to co-workers' food in the fridge<sup>ii</sup>



**38%**

of unhappy workers admitted to listening in on a private conversation<sup>ii</sup>



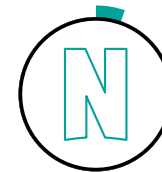
**40%**

to playing pranks on co-workers<sup>ii</sup>



**5%**

to drinking alcohol<sup>ii</sup>



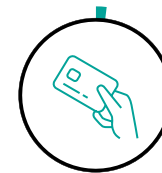
**5%**

to watching Netflix<sup>ii</sup>



**15%**

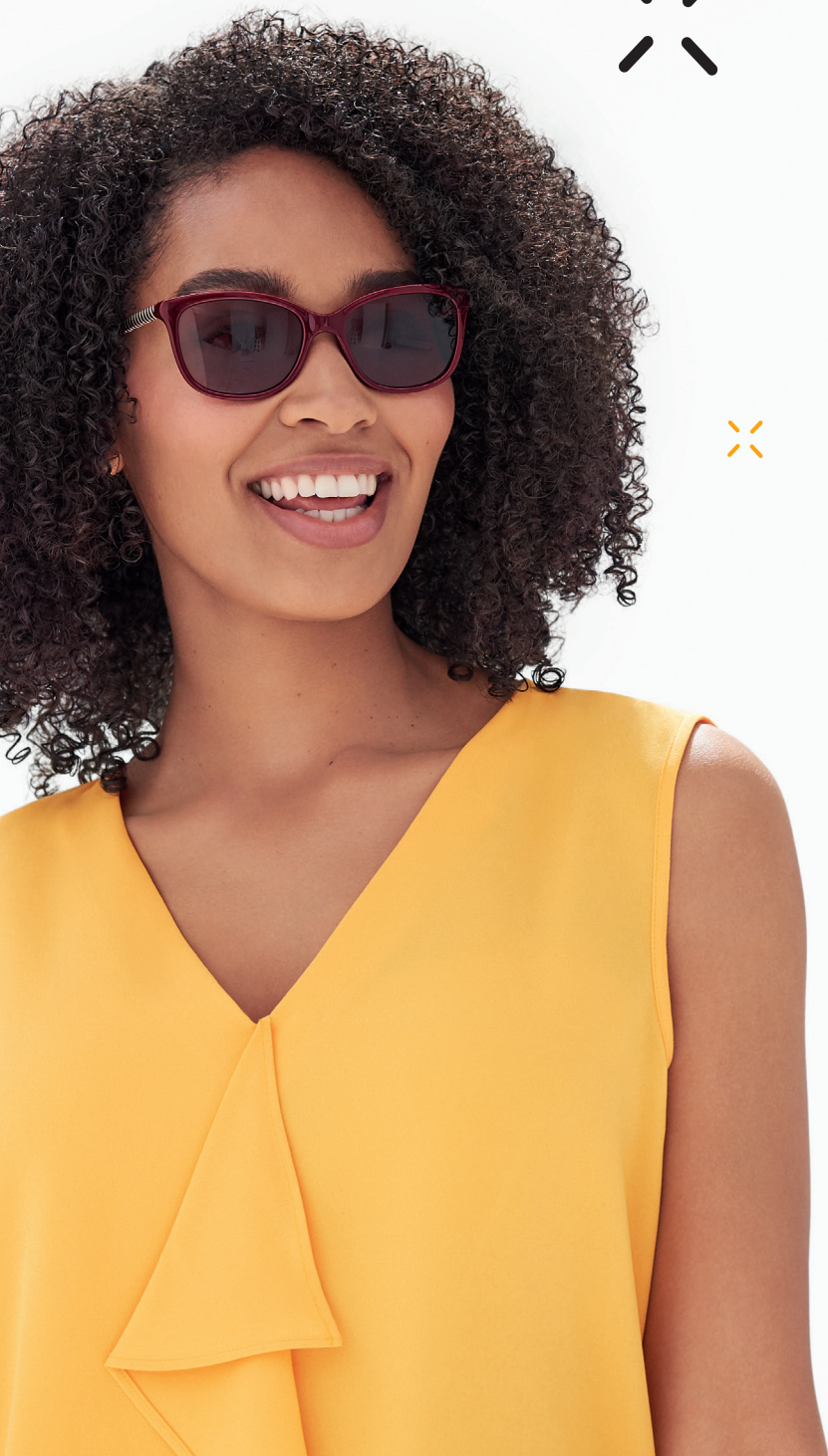
to taking naps<sup>ii</sup>



**2%**

to using the company credit card for personal purchases<sup>ii</sup>

Whilst these statistics may be daunting (except the pranks – sometimes, you’ve just got to put a stapler in some jelly), encouraging engagement among your team doesn’t have to be a painful exercise.



# Here are just a few ideas to get you started...



## Motivating mentors

One great way to engage employees is to pair new hires with current members of your team. This demonstrates to your existing employee that you respect their abilities enough to give them a position of authority, and it's a great way to earn their trust and respect. With this technique, you will also show new employees that you value their development, and want to do everything you can to help them grow.



## Drive development

If you can't see the top of a mountain, you're a lot less likely to start climbing. The same can be said for employees working in a large organisation with little room for development. Without the opportunity to flourish, many people will look elsewhere for a role that has more potential. This is why it's vital to ensure your employees have something to aim at – as well as the support of their managers, so they know they're on the right path to achieving their goals. You can achieve this easily, using monthly goal and target check-ins to discuss your employees' development.



## Feedback free-for-alls

It's important to understand the experience of everyone in your workplace – from Sandra, the newbie in accounts, to Harry, who's been on the team for more years than he can count on both fingers and toes (having tried at the last Christmas party). That's why we recommend holding regular feedback sessions, open to all, as well as frequent anonymous surveys, to provide people with the opportunity to raise grievances they otherwise wouldn't feel comfortable sharing.

**Taking just a few measures to ensure your employees stay connected to your company can have a huge impact on their engagement levels. This, in turn, can have delightful effects on your corporate culture, as well as employee retention and acquisition rates, and the end-customer's experience – it really is an all-round win.**



# Empowering decision-making

Enabling employees to make their own decisions is a great way to show them respect. By giving them the autonomy to manage their work load, you can empower your employees to work more effectively, and leave the workplace in a better mood, knowing they're the one in control of their life. And, given that studies have shown autonomy makes workers more satisfied with their jobs and increases productivity...<sup>iii</sup>

**There's no time like the present to start encouraging your employees to decide for themselves. Here are three tips we've found handy...**



## Provide power

When you've identified the employees who are clearly capable of handling responsibility, find ways to give them power. We know you can't hand out promotions left, right and centre, but finding even small opportunities to give your employees authority is a sure-fire way to leave them feeling empowered, and capable of making their own decisions. Whether you let Sharky-Steve take the lead on a project, or ask Ventroliquist-Val to decide the destination for the next Christmas do - when you give them power, you'll also be making them happier in their roles.



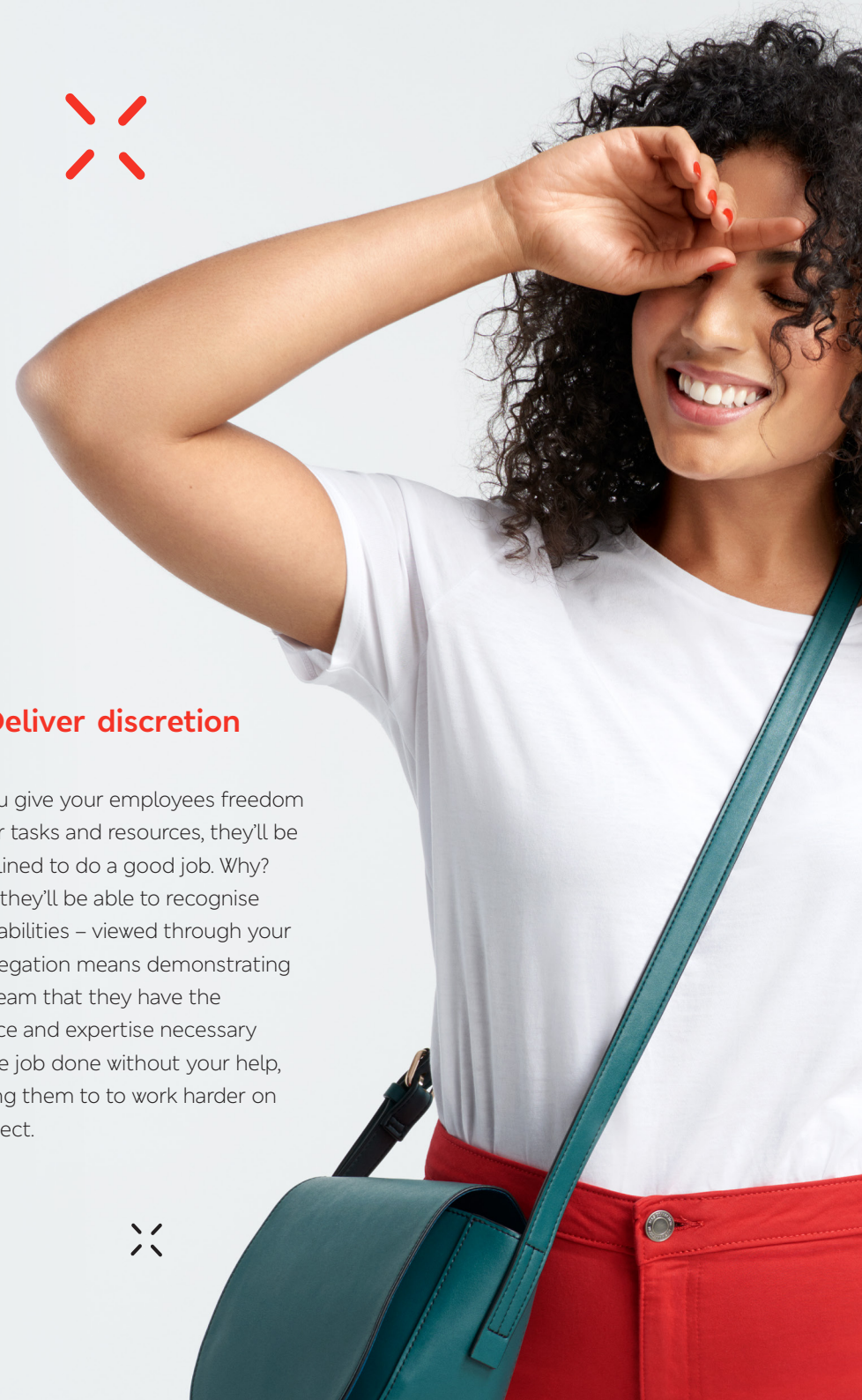
## Stop second-guessing

Your employees want to know you trust their decisions and ideas, and second-guessing, whilst at times necessary, can have a detrimental effect on your worker's happiness in their role. When you question your employee's decisions, you're undermining their confidence, which reduces the likelihood that they'll share ideas with you in the future. So, unless it's absolutely necessary, stop second-guessing, and instead put your faith in your workforce.



## Deliver discretion

When you give your employees freedom over their tasks and resources, they'll be more inclined to do a good job. Why? Because they'll be able to recognise their capabilities - viewed through your eyes. Delegation means demonstrating to your team that they have the experience and expertise necessary to get the job done without your help, motivating them to work harder on their project.







## Empowering individuality

In order to get the most out of your employees, you have to understand exactly what they have to offer, recognising them as individuals with varying skills and abilities, so you can nurture their best traits. When you consider the fact that...

**Employees who use their strengths, skills, and abilities every day are six times more likely to be engaged at work, 8% more productive, and 15% less likely to leave their jobs.<sup>iv</sup>**

It's clear that focusing on your employees' workplace experience to ensure they're best positioned to do a good job can have real and lasting results.



# Luckily, this can be accomplished by following three straightforward steps: **watch, listen and utilise...**



## Watch

When we say watch, we don't mean peeking through the blinds from your office and making everyone think you've got an evil plan. Watching your employees means noticing where they're excelling, and where they're struggling to keep up. When you track an employee's progress this way, you can use the information you gather to position your team in the roles best-suited to their abilities. But, it's not just about how well the job is done...



## Listen

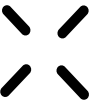
Whilst Jack might be an absolute genius in the art of data entry, if he absolutely loathes the task, he's not likely to stick around for long. When listening to feedback from your employees, it's important to do everything you can to take it on board – even if this may initially seem counterintuitive, because if you're employees are unhappy, this will have a negative effect on business. It can also be useful to note who the feedback is coming from, as this will inform you on how this employee is feeling about their role, the challenges they're currently facing, and the workplace more generally. This can provide you with the perfect opportunity to best utilise their skills. And that brings us onto the final step...



## Utilise

Now that you've taken note of your employees' skills, and you've recognised their preferences, you can collate this information to determine the best position for your employees. Be sure to discuss any movements in roles in detail with them first, to ensure they're happy with your decision.

**Once you've followed these three easy steps, you should be left with a powerhouse of a workforce - your own group of superheroes. And we think a team like this deserves to be rewarded...**







## Empowering Growth

Once you've tried out all of the techniques we've talked about over the course of this guide, you'll likely be left with a happy and hardworking team, but in order to keep your employees feeling positive in their roles, it's important to provide your workforce with individual rewards. Why?

# 59%

**of employees agreed that being recognised for accomplishments at work is the largest single contributor to their overall sense of belonging.<sup>v</sup>**

So, not only can rewards improve employee retention rates, but they're also a sure-fire way to put a smile on the face of every member of your workforce.

Companies with happy employees outperform the competition by **20%**, and happy salespeople close **37%** more sales.<sup>vi</sup>

There really aren't any downsides to showing your employees you value their work. Give your employees the gift of empowerment.

Only **42%** of employees are happy with the rewards and recognition that their companies offer.<sup>vii</sup>



# M&S Corporate Gift Cards

Show your employees how much you appreciate them by giving them something of value. We recommend a high-quality gift card, as this offers your workforce the opportunity to purchase

something they've had their eye on, but haven't yet bought. It puts the power and control in their hands, whilst positioning you as a thoughtful leader, who cares about what their team really wants.



To demonstrate that you respect your employees' interests, empower them to spend it well with an M&S gift card.

**For more information, contact 0330 058 0734, or email [amelia.fidling@mands-corporategifts.co.uk](mailto:amelia.fidling@mands-corporategifts.co.uk) today.**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cv-library.co.uk/recruitment-insight/why-you-should-encourage-your-employees-to-be-themselves/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hrdrive.com/news/disengaged-and-tired-workers-do-scary-things-randstad-study-says/508313/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://qz.com/676144/why-its-your-call-is-the-best-thing-you-can-say-to-keep-employees-happy/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/236561/employees-strengths-outperform-don.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/company-culture/2017/employees-share-what-gives-them-a-sense-of-belonging-at-work>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.snacknation.com/blog/employee-happiness/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.inc.com/will-yakowicz/the-importance-of-giving-recognition.html>